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PHILIPPINES

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE PROJECT (EJP)

OBJECTIVE

Now on its fourth phase, the **Environmental Justice Project (EJP)** aims to provide legal assistance to indigenous and other local communities participating in government sponsored community-based natural resource management (CBNRM) programs. This support includes helping local groups defend forest and marine natural resources against illegal users, developing metalegal strategies to promote and defend community based property rights (CBPRs), conducting skill-sharing activities and paralegal trainings, and strengthening community-based institutions and local leaders. The EJP has targeted to reach at least 75 local communities for this fourth phase.

PARTNERSHIPS

Assistance to Local Communities and Public Interest Environmental Law Groups in Support of the Government of the Philippines Community-Based Natural Resource Management Initiatives is a USAID-funded grant to the Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL) based in Washington, D.C., in collaboration with Philippine public interest environmental law groups Tanggol Kalikasan (TK), Environment Legal Assistance Center (ELAC), and Paglilingkod Batas Pangkapatiran Foundation (PBPF), and since FY 04, the U.P. Los Baños College of Forestry and Natural Resources (UPLB-CFNR). This initiative, renamed the Environmental Justice Project, commenced in 1997.

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PROGRAMS



Local Legal Assistance. The EJP supports indigenous communities in securing recognition of their CBPRs through Certificates of Ancestral Domain Titles. Migrant communities are helped in securing community forestry management agreements (CFMAs). Project partners also provide law enforcement and legal training to forest and coastal communities to facilitate the apprehension of groups engaged in illegal logging and fishing.

Defending the Defenders Initiative. The main objectives of this effort launched during FY 04 are to: 1) Test the availability and soundness of the concept of providing legal assistance to environmental enforcers who are harassed with court cases, 2) Create awareness among policy makers of the need to provide resources for the defense of the government's environmental enforcers, and 3) Develop a more comprehensive environmental law enforcement legal support program.

Policy Support. EJP partners monitor natural resources management policy developments and provide advice on request.

Immersions/Internships. The EJP also supports student community immersions and internships for law and forestry students.

Lawyer's Conferences. The EJP supports skills sharing among public interest environmental lawyers through at least one lawyer's conference a year. Last November 2004, the EJP partners co-hosted the Philippine Forum on Environmental Justice. The national forum sought to identify and explore issues and concerns surrounding the fair and equitable governance of forest and coastal natural resources. EJP also provided support for the 4th All Asia Public Interest Environmental Law Conference held during March 2004. Over 50 Asian NGO lawyers participated and shared innovative and effective strategies to promote environmental justice.

PUBLICATIONS

- ⇒ Rural Communities and Philippine Forests: Case Studies and Insights on Law and Natural Resources (2004)
- ⇒ Marine and Coastal Resources and Community Based Property Rights (CBPRs): Proceedings of a Philippine Workshop (2004)

For Phase Four, the EJP plans to release two more research publications.

MORE INFO:

Grantee: Center for International Environmental Law (CIEL)

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